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Fennelly

Contact: Kerry

(202)224-6769

## **MACK: USE TOBACCO LEGISLATION FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH FUNDING**

Washington — U.S. Senator Connie Mack (R-FL) today called for any comprehensive tobacco legislation to contain significant medical research funding, including studies to find cures for the very diseases caused by tobacco addiction.

Testifying today before the Senate Commerce Committee, Mack said, "It is time for America to take this opportunity to win the war against teen smoking and, at the same time, win the war against the diseases which plague our society."

The text of Mack's statement follows:

I am here today to encourage the passage of comprehensive bipartisan tobacco control legislation. I am also here to give you my commitment to work with the Commerce Committee in order to achieve this goal. I believe that a consensual agreement between the tobacco companies and the American people will be the most effective way to improve the health of our citizens, and especially our youth.

Believe me, I have had to work hard to overcome my personal disgust with the conduct of tobacco company executives, and frankly, I am not sure it is even possible.

The lying and deceiving of the American public that was essentially a tobacco corporate philosophy has angered me beyond words.

But, as the Attorney General from Mississippi said last Thursday while testifying before this Committee, "If we don't get over being mad, we'll never get even."

I think he's right. It's time for Congress to move forward, to work in a bipartisan manner, and to enact the legislation which the American people expect of us.

I am here to encourage my colleagues on this Committee to take this monumental opportunity to "get even" in the most constructive way I know -- by forcing Big Tobacco to pick up the tab for finding cures to the very diseases they have caused. For there to be comprehensive tobacco legislation without significant medical research funding would be a tragedy.

As many of you know, my family and I have a history of cancer. Although lung cancer was not diagnosed in my family, we know first-hand the anxiety that is felt upon hearing the words, "you have cancer". We also know the fear upon discovering that even the very best treatment available today is, in many cases, a long way from a cure.

The Senate has indicated unprecedented support for a significant commitment to the National Institutes of Health. Tobacco companies should, at the very least, pay for research into new methods of treatment and cures for the horrible disease the industry has inflicted upon our citizens.

And remember, if the Settlement works as we hope it does, and tobacco consumption is reduced, our job is still not complete. Despite our best efforts, many of the current 50 million American smokers will still be smoking, unable to break the cycle of addiction, and eventually suffering from the associated illnesses.

If our emphasis is limited to simply reducing smoking, without finding cures for disease, we will have abandoned those who are still addicted and accomplished only half of our mission. Who better to fund the research necessary to alleviate the pain and suffering that the remaining smokers will endure than Big Tobacco?

I also believe it is essential to remain firm in our long-standing policy that scientists, not Congress, should decide how these funds should be directed. Why? Because you never know where basic scientific research will lead.

Let me give you two examples. Just two years ago, there was little indication of a direct link between tobacco use and glaucoma. Today, because of unrestricted basic scientific research, we know this link exists.

Another example is cancer and AIDS. In the 1980's, scientists at the National Cancer Institute were working to develop a therapy for the treatment of cancer. Unfortunately, this treatment did not work. However, this same research later led NCI scientists, working with the private sector, to develop the drug AZT -- the first FDA-approved therapy which actually slowed down the progression of HIV.

If Congress had tied the hands of scientists by limiting the use of research dollars to a specific disease, it is highly likely that these two important discoveries would never have happened. And there are countless other examples of how research into one disease helps our understanding of other diseases. As a result, I believe we must resist our temptation to earmark research dollars for specific research initiatives.

It is the right thing to do to make Big Tobacco pay for research into the addictive nature of tobacco, to pay for research into ways to enable smokers to end their addiction, and it is the right thing to do to provide NIH and CDC with the necessary resources to conduct research into the areas they believe will be successful.

So, over the upcoming months as we tackle the issue of teen smoking and as we force Big Tobacco to correct its misdeeds from the past, we must work together to stop this industry from targeting the next generation.

The challenge before us is great. There are many complex and politically-charged issues we must resolve. These include issues such as limited immunity from litigation, proposing effective approaches to reducing teen smoking, addressing the legitimate concerns raised by our farmers, and ensuring that all affected parties are adequately represented by our legislation.

But America has always responded when our people are behind the challenge. America landed a man on the moon. We pioneered computer technology. America won the cold war.

We have the knowledge. We have the technology. And, most importantly, we have the support of the American people.

Now, it is time for America to take this opportunity to win the war against teen smoking and, at the same time, win the war against the diseases which plague our society.

I thank you for the opportunity to come before this Committee today, and I look forward

to working with each of you in the future.

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